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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

IN

OLD WARWICK.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON

MEMORIAL DAY, AUGUST 18, 1904,

IN WARWICK, MASS.,

BY

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN OLD WARWICK.

An Address Delivered on Memorial Day, August 18, 1904, in Warwick, Mass., by Rev. A. D. Mayo, A. M., LL. D.

Some four years ago I was hoping that my annual visit to Warwick might be renewed, but a doubtless good Providence was otherwise disposed. Beginning with early autumn, the remainder of the year, round to the summer, was passed in what the doctors made up their minds was a final fight for life; in which the weight of professional opinion was, as now and then happens, delivered on the wrong side. For while, I suppose, the majority of my non-professional friends were waiting for my exit, I, "being still of sound mind," reverted to the old days and, quite naturally, to the old Warwick habit of "toughing it out" till even a greater age than my own. I remembered that my good little mother, who never pulled the steelyards at 100 pounds, but went through a greater amount of hard work to the square yard than any of her sex I recall, stepped out at the age of 89—by accident. Her mother, the "Aunt Beulah" of old Warwick, did better still; as the "accident" that carried her off was postponed till 98. Then, great grandmother "Susannah" held on till 96. My two grandfathers served this world bravely and well till the respective ages of 83 and 85; one of them, at his death, having served his country as postmaster for more than fifty years. The crown of this human structure was my great grandfather, the longest lived of a family of venerable brethren, who, at 96, sold his farm in the valley of the Connecticut and moved "West," then St. Lawrence Co., New York, to "grow up with the country," and

grew until, at 100, he voted for grandfather Harrison as President; and died at 101 of a cold caught in walking at the head of a procession to celebrate the new President's inauguration. Had he not taken that cold he might have been one of President Ben. Harrison's postmasters, forty years later.

Then my memory served me with some of the facts in the history of Warwick; that in 1854, with a population of 1,000, there were fifty-nine people in the old town over 70 years of age; eleven above 80 and two past 90. Later, in 1872, when the population of the town had shrunk to 800, there were four over 90, fifteen past 80 and twenty-seven beyond 70. Then I further remembered that Dr. Holland, in his "History of Western Massachusetts," reports that Warwick, with one of the roughest winter climates in the State, was celebrated above all other of its 350 towns for its number of extremely old people. By that time you may "guess" that, in the language of the prayer-book, I was "both afraid and ashamed" to "go back" on my own forebears and the dear old town. So I "braced up" and—here I am; and I advise all you, boys and girls, to select as long-lived a generation as my own; so that when not only "heart and flesh fail," but doctors agree to your dismissal, you may fall back on your native highlands and continue until Providence, in whose hands we all abide forever, invites you to migrate and "grow up with the country" in some future kingdom of Heaven.

But now that I am once more here, let me thank you for the kindness with which you have remembered the sick young man that, at the age of 23, away back in the 40's, finally left his Warwick home for the life that has carried him through every portion of our own country save the Pacific Coast and the new colonial possessions half round the world. And never has a week passed in that more than half century that the life of my childhood, youth and early manhood has not enveloped me, as in a far-off world

of delightful recollections; never more vivid and enchanting than when, a month ago, I made up my mind that not only pleasure but duty called me back to your yearly festival.

Any stranger can easily learn a good deal of that period of which I speak today, from 1823 to 1848, when Warwick was certainly at its best estate, according to the time-honored idea of a successful New England town. There were then 1150 people; the majority of the leading families direct descendants of the settlers, chiefly from what is now "the Greater Boston," who, eighty years before, laid out a road from Roxbury 75 miles into the Wilderness of "Gardner's Roxbury Canada;" fifteen years later rechristened Warwick; as good "Squire Blake" fancies, "in memory of the famous Guy, Earl of Warwick," in the old home across the sea. Probably at no time was the land so productive or well tilled as then. The furore for shaving the town clean of it's grand old forests of beach, chestnut and pine was then only apparent in the fifteen saw mills that "turned out" for the neighboring towns a million feet of lumber every year. The people still all gathered on Sunday in the old meeting house upon the common, although "other denominations" were not taxed for the support of any save their own public worship. The ten district schools were in full blast. In short; the twenty-five years in old Warwick, of which I speak, cover the period when the town was one of the best illustrations of country life in the New England of seventy years ago. How it looked from the windows of the parson's house is told in the two charming volumes of Mrs. Fayette Smith, familiar to you. But it is the blessedness of our human lot that every living man and woman becomes a poet and an artist with the retreating years from childhood. Each of the two or three hundred "children and youth" that came up with myself, if spared long enough, had a separate picture of life in old Warwick, beautiful in spite of whatever hardships, toils or trials may have been the environment.

But I am not here today to inflict upon you my own picture of the first third of my life in old Warwick, beginning in 1823, when the incorporated town was about sixty years old. I propose to attempt a more useful and, I hope, interesting theme—to try to ascertain from my own experience and observation what were the elements of society and the circumstances that made what we fondly call "old Warwick" one of the model towns of New England, and what made the New England town of seventy years ago, according to the historians, the most notable university for the citizenship of a world's republic in ancient or modern days. And then, with full recognition of the past and all the precious legacies it has bequeathed to us, I would enter my protest against the academic pessimism that, through speech and song and story and editorial comment, bewails the present breaking up of that order of affairs; with blatant prediction of a hundred varieties of local, municipal, State and national ruin in the nearby future. A distinguished Doctor of Divinity in the flourishing new city of Atlanta, Ga., on learning that I hailed from Boston, replied: "Well, I suppose your old town is about done growing." Another statesman, now out of politics, addressed 3,000 people in Tremont Temple on "The Financial Decay of Massachusetts." The trouble with the learned doctor was that he thought, because his own city was growing, every town a hundred years old must be on the decline. The statesman's difficulty, as I found afterwards, was his own inability to pay his debts at home. The same delusion appeared, as I remember, in a meeting of "us boys," held on the haymow of my grandfather's barn, to decide on the celebration of Independence Day, by a ball. The "society leader" among us was stricken with an unaccountable indifference, which, after a good deal of pumping, came out in the despairing tone: "Why, all the girls have gone to Boston"; whereupon somebody piped up: "It's only your girl that's gone to Boston. Why don't you take the stage and dance

with her down there?" It is our human misfortune that, when our personal heydey is waning, we can hardly believe it is sunrise anywhere else. So, if I succeed, I hope to leave such of you as lived in or near the old times not in despair of the Warwick which is today; but with a well-founded hope of what may be in store for it in the next half century. I shall never forget that, between the ages of ten and fifteen, I never went to sleep on the little front seat in the "Center School House" at the Lyceum when grand old Squire Jonathan Blake put on his glasses and, whether in verse or prose, wherever he began, loomed up as the Town Prophet. When there were not a hundred miles of railroad in Massachusetts he predicted all the glories of the limited express from ocean to ocean, with glimpses of other things yet undiscovered. Still the summit of his prophecy was "not in sight" of the magnificent revelations of even the past fifty years. Each of you, boys and girls, now lives under a new heaven, on a new earth, from the realm in which I lived in my first twenty-five years. Each of you is doing or reading about and perfectly at home with a dozen things that my grandfathers could no more accomplish than work one of the miracles of the New Testament. So I, at the close of my familiar talk today, would send you home with your "heads swimming" with hope of the possibilities of the New Massachusetts, already in sight; even as we used to go home from the Lyceum at the ringing of the nine-o'clock bell, after we had one on the new church, to dream of the future, determined to launch out and "go where glory waited."

So let me now, as briefly as the importance of the subject will warrant, try to set forth some of the elements which made for the success of the better order of New England towns seventy years ago. I say "the better order"; because there were then "mean towns" as well as "mean people" in every town; I fancy, in at least as large propor-

tion and often with a greater opportunity for mischief making than among their descendants of today.

First, and largely, we must consider the original population of the six miles square, now partly Warwick and Orange; the large majority, however, left in Warwick at the division of territory. This population originally consisted of some sixty proprietors, who by act of the "Great and General Court," of Massachusetts, in the year 1735, made this one of four townships, each of six miles square, to be assigned in sixty-three equal shares "one for the first settled minister, one for the use of the ministry and one for the schools;" the sixty remaining to be given to the petitioners and "such as were the descendents of the officers and soldiers who served in the expedition to Canada in the year 1690." In 1738 a portion of this group appeared and were given possession, each of a fifty-acre home-lot. From this date until 1763, for twenty-eight years, the settlement grew under the name of "Gardner's Roxbury Canada," by three separate distributions of land, 'till its incorporation by the General Court, by the name of Warwick. The entire original territory included nearly 25,000 acres of land, and was divided largely according to the quality, the poorer the land the larger the farm. Each of the original proprietors was taxed an equivalent of probably $10.00 to defray expenses; and, as the division went on, the tax increased. Indeed, it is probable that each of the first sixty proprietors was assessed a sum from $30.00 to $50.00, equivalent to a much larger sum at present, to encourage the first ten who found out "the nearest route from Roxbury" to this new tract of country. Ten years later, the bounty was increased to £20 to each individual, and later to £30.

Now here was a principle of selection of good omen for the beginning of the settlement. These people, many of them descendants of soldiers, were evidently more than a fair representative of what is now the Greater Boston, including a good proportion of families honorably distin-

guished for service at home. They were able to offer what was then a generous bounty for real settlers. There was no such rush as we now read of at the settlement of a new State to pre-empt a quarter-section of Uncle Sam's outdoor lot. It was known who came. The fact that the three first lots were assigned for the church, the ministry and the schools, declares the opinion of the settlers in regard to the corner stone of their little commonwealth in the far-off woods.

The coming War of Independence, some ten years after the incorporation of the town, found these people so thoroughly alive to the situation that they even overcame their habitual reverence for the clergy, and were only prevented from "dismissing, disarming and confining" their first minister on suspicion of Toryism, on his pledge, "upon honor, not to influence or prejudice the minds of the people against the common cause." Their behavior through the whole period of the war; their instructions to the first delegate sent to the Colonial Convention; their deliberate consultation at the various steps that led to the organization of the new State; the character of the men they sent to the Legislature and elected to the various town and county offices; all speak well of the town. As we go on in the analysis of society, as I remember it, through the twenty-five most prosperous years of the town, we shall meet at every step with the assurance that these people who first built the road through the boundless forest in sight of Mount Grace, then opened the pathway through the woods to their nearest neighbors, and for the first fifty years toiled with heart and brain and hands to get the new settlement "out of the woods" "meant business," and went about their "job" with a deliberate wisdom, a courage and a patience that account for what I found at my earliest recollection concerning the people among whom I was born and to whom I owe the best of what I am and have been able to do in life.

During these more than fifty years of my absence from

my native town, though no "globe trotter," I have been called practically to spend about an equal division of time in my own country in each of its continental divisions save the Western mountain region and Pacific coast—in New England, the old Middle, the original Western and all the Southern States. I am confident I have never known a population of 1,000 people in one community that contained within itself the elements of more valuable service to the Republic than the old Warwick of my day. During the past seventy-five years it has sent forth perhaps as large a number of able men for leadership in the industrial and all the professional departments of American life, with "noble women not a few," as any similar community in any portion of the country. My last letter from the late Bishop Frederic Dan Huntington, for two terms in his early manhood a Warwick schoolmaster, contains a most discriminating, appreciative and affectionate remembrance of the leading families of the town in that period. As before said, here was a "fair start" for Warwick in its first hundred years of life as one of the 350 and more towns of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It does not follow that the mere organization of a New England township was responsible for its power and influence; so great that Thomas Jefferson, among the good things he couldn't do, seriously proposed to cut up old Virginia in imitation of its rival, Massachusetts, into the towns that came nearer realizing the original Virginia ideal of "State rights" than any southern commonwealth ever succeeded in translating that theory to an accomplished fact. There were plenty of towns then in Massachusetts that did not succeed in this way. Indeed, there were several that, in the expressive language of the day, were baptized "Hell Town," and required several "revivals of religion" to get them in sight of the golden gates. But there has yet been found no recipe for making a good town, state or nation of a people in that condition of ignorance, superstition, shiftlessness, vulgarity and vice known by the diction-

ary name, "Illiteracy." It was because Warwick was from the first what it has been all through—a "chosen people;" that we, her children, today feel ourselves honored as we recount and recall her "days of old."

2d. From such an origin, it is not difficult to understand how the foundations of the new town were laid in its family life. The Puritan folk of New England "had no use" for an unmarried man or woman; and the cruel stigma of "old maid" for generations had inflicted a chronic slander on the fair name and fame of this class, until Theodore Parker came to the rescue, in his triumphant eulogy on "The Glorious Old Maids of Massachusetts." The early settlers of Warwick probably did not include a large contingent of "old bachelors," as the additional persuasive to early marriage was offered by the gift of a farm to each family. A fundamental idea concerning the old-time New England family was that marriage was no sentimental arrangement of the "oak and ivy" persuasion, but was a manly and womanly partnership for life; first to love God and each other, and then, "till death us do part," to "*work* together for good." This law of service had no exceptions. Of course, there was the usual half-conscious arrangement of a mild class distinction in the society of the place; possibly a dozen of the sixty families by common consent being "looked up to" and relied on for social and other sorts of leadership. But the one thing that has always separated vitally any genuine upper class in New England society from every historical aristocracy of the old or its modern imitation in the new world, was spoken "once for all" in Palestine, when the Master said: "Let him who is greatest among you be your servant." "On this rock" is builded the entire structure of modern Christian, as opposed to every form of a selfish paganized, order of society. This group of superior families, as I knew them in my youth, was represented by perhaps fifty of the hardest-working men and women in the community, whose names appear when-

ever the people are called to elect anybody for any important service. Their superiority was not gauged by money; indeed it is doubtful if any man in town in my day was "worth 40,000 dollars"—why they didn't make it $50,000 was one of the puzzles of my boyhood. While comfortable living was the rule, and perhaps a score of the houses were larger if not better than others, there was no luxurious life. I have no recollection that any Warwick family in the twenty-five years named had a permanent servant. Every mother, not an invalid, was her own housekeeper and the girls were trained for the same office; with few exceptions a type of housekeeping which has passed into history and literature, and, as far as the "pies" are concerned, deserves commemoration in poetry. A few daughters of the poorer families were available for occasional "help;" always expecting to "sit at the table" with the family, especially "when it had company." We had the usual dressmaker and the "tailoress," dear jolly "Aunt Experience," who carried every man's "measure" in her capacious memory, and taught me to fold my first "tailcoat" so thoroughly that I always remember her on that occasion. Her reign was only disturbed by the irruption of a "gentleman tailor from Ireland," whose term of service came to a sudden end in a street fight with a crowd of the saucy boys of the town. The general philanthropic work, now in the hands of two or three societies and churches, was concentrated in grand old Aunt Annie, who knew by instinct where she was wanted—in her own words, "had nussed in every family in town"—and probably died in honorable maidenhood because she loved every man in town so dearly she couldn't break the hearts of all the rest by marrying any one; and as for the children! the famous picture of Germany, by Kaulbach, a glorious German woman with children hanging all about her, was a correct portrait of Warwick's good Aunt Annie.

The New England women for two hundred years from

Plymouth Rock, as a body the most intelligent, effective and every way worthy of their sex then in Christendom, were the only body so numerous that with occasional exceptions had no servant class in the household. Rough labor in the European field and on the old American plantation changes woman to a beast of burden, in some ways stronger and more effective than man. But such work as was given to the women of New England for two hundred years, accompanied by the upper-story service in the family and society, was too much even for the powerful physical constitution brought from England. In my youth the crisis came with such a general breakdown of the health of young women as might have wrought a social disaster had not a good Providence sent us Bridget from the Green Island and labor-saving machinery in the home, fifty years of which has brought to the native-born New England women the marvelous reversion to health and supreme activity we now behold.

A great help to happy marriage was the good old New England function of "courting." Courting was a serious business, especially to the young woman partner. My father used to tell how on one occasion, having started in his best rig on a week-day evening to visit his "Sophronia," he was met by his father with the order: "Go home, boy. None of that till Sunday night." So, after the best girl had spent the busiest kind of a Sunday morning and afternoon at church service, probably singing in the choir, with five-o'clock singing school, including the Sunday dinner, and then had faced her destiny by "sitting up" with her admirer from "early candle lighting" to the small hours, leaving only a brief hour for sleeping before up at daylight to wrestle the terrors of Monday washing day, and had "stuck to that" for one, possibly two or three years, if she didn't know her man she had only herself to blame. I have no recollection of a divorce, and not half a dozen family separations, and those only for extreme cause, with hardly

a sexual scandal, in the twenty-five years of my residence in Warwick. There were notable cases of a good woman who held on to a drunken husband year by year, until she finally pulled him into the church, where he died, certainly free from the odor of New England rum, if without "the odor of sanctity." And out of several of these families came a set of boys, sent forth by their brave mothers to earn distinction.

While doubtless all these people, save a few store and tavern loungers, did work too hard, yet that tireless industry and careful economy of two hundred years was the foundation of the industrial superiority of New England today, which will endure as long as the corner-stone on which it was builded is not broken. But here the economy of New England meant *saving on the lower side to invest in the upper side of life.* The money saved, often by bodily hardship, was used to build the church and the school, send the boy to college, always invested at the top of life, verifying the divine precept: "All things shall be added unto" a man or state that "first seeks the kingdom of God and His righteousness." My own first twenty-five dollars that sent me to college at twenty was obtained by the present of an empty powder flask or can by my father, with a hole in the top, through which anything from a cent to a ninepence could be dropped, but out of which nothing could be rescued until it was filled.

Of course, in every form of society as intense as that described a good deal must be allowed for an omnipotent, omnicient and omnipresent social public opinion, which made every man, woman and child a sort of detective police in regard to everybody's business. The "after clap" of this was seen when the boys began to leave us for Boston, Cincinnati and New Orleans, seventy years ago the three lighthouses that shot their rays from afar to allure every ambitious youth. Then, of course, came the usual breaking loose of the boy who could do only one disreputable

thing at home, "get drunk." And there were enough domestic tragedies of good girls, carried off their feet to marry worthless young men from the cities, to set up two or three successors to the late Miss Mary E. Wilkins. Still, the morale of the town followed the large majority who went forth to make a record of which any community might well be proud. Some of you, bright school boys or girls, could do no better than look up the names of the young folk who for the last seventy years have left Warwick to become worthy and often distinguished citizens of the Republic in almost every honorable position in life.

The industry of the New England women and children of that day was something marvelous. With their butter and cheese, their weaving and spinning, with the new industry of braiding palm-leaf hats, for nearly a generation they really were the "better half" in the support of the family. The trade in the stores was almost exclusively "barter" in the few articles of home consumption, leaving the productions of the farm and forest to be utilized for building up the permanent investment of the family.

During the ten years that I kept my father's store accounts I have no recollection of any woman making a "bad debt." They were "hard customers" to sell goods to, because they knew the pay for them would come out of their own flesh and blood. There was the usual number of "men folks" who would "run up a debt" to the straining point, which they probably never intended to pay. The popular talk of the decline of honesty in business in New England received its first protest, with a good many other humbugs, from Theodore Parker, when he declared that the Boston of his day, so far as business went, in honesty was far beyond any previous time. Seventy years ago, everywhere in the United States, business meant "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." The great revelations of breach of trust, turning corporation screws, and, most dangerous of all, denying the natural right to work for a living to whole

classes of men, are simply the logical results of that old style of trading, beginning with the boys swapping jack-knives, and permeating society from ridge-pole to cellar. Ninety per cent. of the men worth $100,000 in New England today began their lives as all but half a dozen boys began in Warwick, and in every country store or trading place every "trick of trade" was practiced by these young men in the getting of their fortunes. So in these latter days this habit has blossomed out into the gigantic tyrannies of labor and capital, to the horror of the whole noble army of pessimists. The way out of all this is an organization of industry, which, in due time, will come in sight of the other searchlight of the gospel: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The shadow side of that old family life was, first, its terrible intensity; second, its ignorance of sanitary law, which located family diseases that carried off one member after another with the regularity of the executioner's call in the Reign of Terror in Paris, and almost every autumn after the short summer's overwork would plunge the whole community into epidemics that now seem to have abandoned the North and retreated to the South, as I have observed for the last twenty years. There was also a great lack of wholesome amusement. Even the liberalized religion of the new congregationalism held the young people with too "taut a rein." The strain was relieved at one end by the almost universal habit of drink and the terrible ravages of drunkenness, until the great temperance movement came in that we still have with us. For the girls, who, with rare exceptions, "let rum alone," the favorite outlet was the half-yearly dance, the occasional excursion or sleigh ride, the delightful berry-picking and the mild flavor of the "forfeit party," where universal osculation seemed to rob that indulgence of all its perils.

3d. When we come to talk of society we can do little but repeat what has already been said of life in the family;

for society in its modern city significance could hardly be said to exist in old Warwick. One half the year was given to "getting a living" out of the stubborn hills and narrow valleys. As an old fellow from the White Mountains expressed it: "This is a country where you have three months to raise things, three months to get 'em under kiver, and six months to eat 'em up. I'm going to take my boys out West." The long winter, really beginning at Thanksgiving and "hanging on" till a bleak Mayday, apart from the usual work of caring for the cattle and keeping up the woodpile, left leisure for something so much better than society as now understood that we deplore the loss of the good old habits of "going a visiting," tea drinking, and the evening neighborhood gathering which left scarcely a house in any permanent loneliness—lighting up the whole community, as you sometimes see from the car windows passing through a wilderness country, a running fire changing a bleak mountain side to a sort of fairyland.

The soul of New England society in that day was the everlasting habit of talk. A people so intelligent, intense and bent on doing things in such a community had everything to talk about. They leaned over the rail fences and talked to each other in the fields. The women talked at their housework, and the clatter of tongues kept time to the rocking of the cradle and the braiding of hats. The village store and the shoemaker's shop were, each in its way, a free university. The meeting-house between the two Sunday services was vocal with the gossip of the women; while the men talked louder, with coarser gossip on the tavern porch and in the postoffice. Nothing was done until it was "talked into shape." So far from avoiding "talking shop," the people did nothing else—their own life, the conditions of public affairs in town, State and nation; every man's business; the minister's sermon; "sizing up" the new school mistress; especially the last engagement as announced by the publication at the church by the

minister or posted up in the notice box. Here was society in its essence; the exchange of opinions by people dead in earnest, engaged in the making of a new Republic that before another half century would astonish the world by the greatest revolution of modern times, leaving the Nation a new world's power, the object lesson of a people's nation to Christendom.

4th. Along with these three foundation stones of the new town in the wilderness was another most important additional "corner stone"; the Church and the Christian Ministry, as originally established in the year of the incorporation of the town, nearly thirty years after its first settlement, and as it had continued for some eighty years until the time of my own final departure from Warwick in 1848. At that time the people had nominally been living under a "Christian ministry," covering a term of nearly eighty years.

As early as 1754 the little colony, while the company was paying 30 pounds bounty for settlers, voted to build a meeting house "35 feet long, 30 wide, with 19 feet posts," at an expense of 26 pounds 13 shillings 4 pence for the builder, the workmen paid four shillings a day. But, not being a log house, it was two years before it came to the "raising," probably the great occasion of the year, accomplished by calling in extra "hands" from Northfield and the adjacent settlements. The Indians were meanwhile engaged in their favorite occupation of "killing and capturing divers persons," and £8 was voted to build a fort for protection against this detachment of Satan's forces in those parts, re-enforced by the wolves and wild cats, on whose heads a heavy price was set. The meeting house went on with the saw mill and the grist mill. In 1760 the first money was raised by the settlement to defray the expense of "some suitable orthodox minister's preaching," and the same year £149 was voted for the settlement and salary of the Rev. Lemuel Hedge; £60 for salary and £9 for expense of "or-

dination," which probably was not under the auspices of the "W. C. T. U." The minister's salary was voted for five years, and afterwards arranged on a sliding scale, to rise as the families increased, thirteen shillings and four pence for each family. One hundred families would give a salary of £80 and "30 cords of wood, cut 8 feet long." The old common, a tract of ten acres, was selected for the meeting-house site, and one hundred acres voted as a settlement to the minister near the present village. Mr. Hedge accepted the terms of settlement, and in March, 1761, the proprietors of the town met in the new building, the congregation consisting of the original 37 families. The meeting-house was also the only Town Hall. A burying ground was added in 1766.

The breaking out of the War of Independence, ten years later, involved the people in difficulty with their minister, who was accused of Toryism, and was only saved from being "dismissed, disarmed and confined" by his promise "on his honor" not to "meddle with politics." A few years later the people voted to excuse the Baptists from taxation for the support of the Congregational minister, and instructed their first delegate to the General Assembly of the colony to advocate "toleration of all persons on the subject of religion without giving one the advantage of the other." The war period was further disturbed by a religious excitement, terminating in the only religious scandal that ever affected the town. Parson Hedge died during the continuance of the war, in 1777, the day that General Burgoyne surrendered in far-off Saratoga, New York, after a ministry of seventeen years.

The people made haste to supply themselves with another spiritual leader in the person of Rev. Samuel Reed. He was ordained in 1779, and in 1794 became also minister of the town. Mr. Reed died in 1812, after a ministry of thirty-three years. There were various legends in circulation during my boyhood bearing upon the physical prowess of this

excellent man, against whose spiritual outfit there seems to have been no protest. But the good man was no worse fitted for the work of the Lord in old Warwick on that account.

In 1814 the Rev. Preserved Smith, son, father, grandfather and probably great grandfather of several well "preserved" generations, was ordained as Mr. Reed's successor, and remained in the position until within two years of my own departure from town in 1848, through a most useful, intelligent and liberal Christian ministry of more than thirty years. During Mr. Reed's ministry the second meeting-house was built, which, to my youthful eyes, was a miracle of ecclesiastical architecture; especially on its first lighting up for a Christmas service, not religious, but a lecture on Peace—a dozen tallow candles in each of what seemed to me its countless windows and a small forest of such green things as could be obtained or imitated within. It was built in 1786 to accommodate the entire population, with forty pews on the ground floor, galleries around three sides with pews above and behind them. One of these big, square pews was appropriated by three of "us boys," in the northwest corner, from which we could look down upon the minister's head, or across into the faces of the two town divinities who sang "treble and counter" in the choir, or do anything except make enough noise to be "called to order" by the parson. A huge "sounding-board" hung suspended over the minister's head in his tall pulpit, with its two rows of seats in the front, where the deacons and the town authorities sat facing the congregation. It was not until I was old enough to carry my mother's "foot stove" to church that the people finally consented to warm the inside. In my early youth this was the only church in town, although there were already two or three organizations of Dissenters, only about half the people then belonging to the Congregational Church, which in creed had become Unitarian in faith, though with no change in organization or polity. The

result of the final disruption of the original church into four "societies," each attempting to support public worship, with a steadily declining population, is well known to all of you.

The noble army of critics who still picture the people of the New England of that day as the slaves of a narrow religious creed, living under the tyranny of a minister, a more complete pope than the venerable head of the Catholic Church at present, in the vernacular language "get the cart before the horse." The difference between all the European and the American churches a century ago was that, over there, the church united with the state made the organized religion for the people, whereas, here the people made the church. Even in the strict days of the Puritan regime, which only lasted until the accession of William and Mary to the throne closed the era of religious persecution in England, the people made the church, chose their own minister, and put him in the pulpit "during good behavior." But at the beginning of the 19th century the occasional clerical heresies in the Congregational Church culminated in the group of ministers which, under the leadership of Channing was finally separated into what was loosely called the Unitarian, but was really a body of the leading churches of Massachusetts, conducted according to the original Congregational idea of the absolute independence of every church, tempered by the liberty of "advising," and in extreme cases leaving a congregation to "work out its own salvation." For more than twenty years of my youth the original church, with perhaps a dozen of the same sort in Central and Western Massachusetts, was one of these, and for thirty years a whole generation of the people had been educated and led by a scholarly, wise and devoted ministry away from controversy.

The New England congregational polity was the only original American form of church organization, all the others being adaptations of the different European churches. In the four or five different religious bodies that accepted it

are gathered today possibly from five to ten thousand congregations. It is the only polity under which the church can adjust its creeds and organization to the advancing Christian civilization of the years without violent agitation, trials for heresy and painful disruptions. When a working majority of a congregation believes in "expansion" it simply calls a minister to represent its faith. At the period named, certainly for fifteen of the twenty-five years, this organization consisted of what was called "church and congregation," the congregation practically the final authority.

The large majority of the people were faithful churchgoers. They came on Sunday in their own "teams," "put them up" in the two great rows of horse sheds near by, and made a day of it for the morning and afternoon service, with an intermission of an hour occupied by the Sunday school, in which the minister still preached to a class of "grown people" in the basement story, while the majority of women visited above stairs and the men talked on the piazza of the hotel or in grandfather's post office. It was all through by three o'clock P. M. and the people went home to their Sunday dinner. The singing was by a volunteer choir, which in my day was well described by Peter Parley's charming story, "A Village Choir." The singers met at five P. M. for a Sunday evening singing school. Every winter good old James Ford, from Rowe, appeared, with a voice like the sound of the North wind, to "keep singing school." That was all there was of church services. The old-time prayer meeting had been given up, the children were no longer catechised, and the minister, still "settled for life," was left to the liberty of becoming what he really was; the "first citizen, the man of all work," educational, spiritual, philanthropic, the constant visitor, adviser and helper of his people, "starting" the boys in their Latin, himself a good scholar and one of the best schoolmen in the region, sending forth a family that made its mark in several States. It may be my delusion of "looking backward," but I cannot

conceive a more enviable position for any competent man, gifted with the spiritual tact and knowledge of human nature that is half of religion, wisely facing the sunrise, than was occupied at that day by the first generation of liberal Congregational clergymen in Massachusetts. They did not build up a great denomination and did not want to. But their writings and their preaching inaugurated a movement that is now mightily at work, from the Catholic to the Christian Science sect, and which in some blessed day perhaps may once more give us a Christian people marshaled in one grand army of the Lord for a final campaign against the lower side of American society to establish that kingdom of God which is not a church, but a civilization, founded on the sermon on the mount, the beatitudes, the Lord's prayer and the law of love to God and man.

5th. Next in importance as one of the vital elements of the old-time New England life was the school. Warwick was not one of the towns favored by an academy, and only occasionally with a private school, although the minister and the new doctor were always ready to help out an ambitious boy or girl in their studies and give advice in good reading. The town was divided into ten school districts, and as the entire school population, including the big boys in winter, was scarcely more than two hundred, several of these schools were very small, although in my day each was favored by a "master." In the autumn what was called "a fall school," a private tuition arrangement, was usually kept up, in which high-school studies were introduced, generally taught by a college graduate.

But the New England common school of that period was simply the center of a group of agencies backed by a public opinion and habit which really made each of the 350 Massachusetts towns of seventy years ago one of the best possible universities for the training of a Republican citizenship, within a short generation to be tested in thegreat Civil War for the preservation of the Union.

One of the orignal conditions of the settlement of the six miles square of mountain wilderness that became Warwick was a provision that one of the sixty-three equal shares of land should be reserved for the support of schools. Immediately after the town had supplied itself with the regulation three "necessaries of life," spiritual and material, a meeting-house, a saw mill and a grist mill, it made haste to vote £10 for the support of a school. During the more than twenty years previous the children were doubtless instructed at home or by the minister. The American common school, established by law in the Massachusetts colony in 1647, declared by Horace Mann "the most important new departure in human affairs since the founding of Christianity," was the first permanent attempt of the whole people to educate all the children by public taxation through the ordinary local, municipal and State agencies of a free government. The colonists of Massachusetts, as a body, were more competent to school their own children than probably any previous settlement representing all orders of society. But it was soon found that the school required a separate organization, and by the time Warwick became a town the district system of schooling had become common through all the settled parts of New England save in Rhode Island. In Warwick the school began in 1768, from the first co-educational, the earliest kept by a woman, notwithstanding the provision that the winter term should be under a master. But it was provided that "if the major part of the quarter where she lived objected against her keeping school the town should dismiss her." She received four and sixpence a week for teaching, her father "throwing in" the board. The appropriations for schools increased in ten years to twice that sum, and in 1785 the town was divided into the ten school districts that remained during the twenty-five years of my own Warwick life.

I was employed to teach in three of these districts, one the "center", the school term lasting two and three months,

at wages of twelve, fifteen and twenty dollars a month, one winter "boarding round" and on the last living at home. My mother had been a school mistress and both my sisters "followed suit." Indeed it was the "eminently respectable" thing for every competent young person to "keep school." The late Bishop F. D. Huntington, on graduating and as a divinity student, was twice the master of our "fall school." He insisted that every boy in his upper class should teach during the coming winter. We all succeeded in getting employment except one, who, after long waiting, was hired; although he reported that he "differed a good deal from the committee when examined in arithmetic and grammar." Horace Mann said "up to our time almost every distinguished public man in New England has been a school master;" and Daniel Webster said, "If I had as many boys as old King Priam, I would send them all to the country district school."

As usual, the critics of that period make the same blunder in their estimate of the old-time country district school as in their talk about the church of the New England of seventy years ago. Of course, tried by the strict laws of the organization, methods of study and discipline and sanitary arrangements of the "New Education," the old schools were "more or less"—sometimes a good deal "more"—defective. But their one superiority in which they surpassed the present system was that they were essentially a vital part of the people. The whole town of Warwick "kept school," at least six months in the year through the country district school, and during the remaining six months "took matters into its own hands." Mr. Emerson wrote to his daughter at a boarding school: "Find out the best teacher and study what he teaches." During my youth, in two important towns where I officiated as schoolmaster, the schools were taught in winter by young men who, with scarcely an exception, afterward became noted and often distinguished, in several cases of national reputation. They were often

college students, and generally the boys engaged in what was then often a peril to life and health, "getting an education." The summer schools were "kept" by the daughters of the ministers, the doctors and the leading families, who afterwards became the foremost women in their communities. Each of these was a "bright and shining light" to the little group of children and youth, encouraging and often helping in private the more ambitious, and even waking up the dunces and arresting the mischief makers. The coming to a town of a thousand people, practically isolated from the world in winter, of half a dozen young men of this sort was a Godsend. They were taken on trust into the best society, and not unfrequently found that winter their "better half" for life.

In addition to this, in my own town, in two or three public and as many private libraries, there were probably 500 books accessible to every boy and girl, like "Harper's Family Library," "Sparks' American Biography," the novels of Miss Sedgwick, Cooper, Scott, and, unhappily, the ghost novels, "The Three Spaniards," "Alonzo and Melissa," and "The Horrors of Oakendale Abbey," which, as I now read their names, send the cold shivers down my spine. Later came the first copy of Shakspeare, which our champion young woman, who braided hats before a book-rack, read through in a week, saying: "They are the prettiest stories I ever read." After several unexpected fights among the boys, fired up by the battles of the dramatist, an eminently respectable old gentleman volunteered the statement: "This Shakspeare makes our boys sassy, and we must put him down." I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the reading I did there before, at the age of seventeen, I ever saw a large library, perhaps covering two or three hundred volumes, was better than that of the city school boy of today, who faces a million volumes and a regiment of advisers concerning what not to read, too often

compromising on the sensational newspapers, magazines and picture papers illustrated by reading.

Then the winter lyceum, which met in the Center school house every week, where the women brought their knitting work and the best men in town wrestled mightily in debate over questions like "Temperance," "Capital Punishment," "Education," "Nullification," "The Annexation of Texas," indeed, everything that could interest the boundless curiosity of such a people; the debate, prefaced often by a half-hour free lecture from some visiting dignitary; was a training school of all others adapted to the condition of the country. Of course, "we boys" were there, crowding the front seats, always wide awake when Squire Blake put on his glasses to hold forth in poetry or prose, or welcome the town's bright woman appearing in one of her sharp and breezy comments on home affairs in the lyceum paper.

The circulation of the press was limited to two Boston weeklies, now represented by the "Advertiser" and "Journal," the county weekly and "The Youth's Companion" in its early youth. At the age of from ten to fifteen my political training began by being perched on grandfather's post-office counter on Friday nights when the Boston mail came in, to read the speeches of Webster, Calhoun, Hayne, Benton and Henry Clay, with the famous interview of Old Hickory, ending, "By the Eternal things *shall* go right."

But all this, including the schools and the minister's sermons, was only an accumulation of material for the endless talk that went on everywhere—between the mothers rocking the cradle, in the shoemaker's shop, at intermission on Sunday, and especially in the village store, where I studied human nature, stretched at length upon the counter, with my head resting upon a pile of cotton cloth, through a cloud of tobacco smoke listening to the great talk that raged up and down before the big fireplace until far into the winter night. Once, at a club, discussing the different means of human culture, Daniel Webster growled out:

"Gentlemen, you have left out the most important university, conversation." American civilization, the World's Republic as we call it now, was talked into shape through 250 years of what was going on in Warwick in my day.

The one drawback in the schools was the half-barbaric discipline. Every master was "put to his trumps" to govern the group of big boys who gave their last winter before 21 at school, often with the double purpose of learning a little more arithmetic and having their own way if they could. The good old way of thrashing, brought over from England, was in full blast. Now and then a master that couldn't keep on his feet was bodily put out of school or dismissed as incompetent. Then one of two pedagogic bullies, whose winters were spent in "keeping out" schools, was called to fill the breach. He generally began by taking some opportunity to thrash every boy and girl with the regulation ferule; in case of any resentment from the victim, handling him or her in a way that would bring a policeman to the rescue in any community in Massachusetts today. I was happily saved from this impending fate, in my first winter's school-keeping, of being put out of the school-house—as was threatened by five big boys, each more than a match for their sixteen-year old master, "small of his age"—by the advice of good Aunt Annie, before mentioned, sitting in one corner of the fire-place, in spectacles and matchless white apron, I, already "shaking in my shoes," in the other. She discoursed deep wisdom: "I know all them folks. I've nussed in every family in that deestrict. You've got five big boys there that say they're going to put you out doors. But I've come home tonight to tell you what to do. There are ten great gals in that school, and they're good gals, too. They say they are not going to have any such works as them boys want. Now you gain the affections of them ten gals and they'll take care of them five big boys, and your school will go just like sliden down hill." On that hint I acted. Four of my enemies were

captured; the fifth by the help of the Lord, I thrashed, and, after a second thrashing from his father, he came back "an exemplary young man." It was no merit of mine. What couldn't any half-scared sixteen-year-old boy do, backed by ten great gals of Warwick? That taught me the secret of all government in school, in family, in the State. Get the best ten gals or boys, men or women on your side—the Lord compromised on ten in the Sodom case—and then trust in Providence and be ready to fight when the brush comes.

6. All that I have now said had its most decisive outcome in the political life of the town. We hear a good deal about the study of "Civics" in our higher schools and colleges, and there is no danger that American youth will know too well the history of their country, the organization of the government and especially the art of reading the political newspapers with profit. The ten most receptive years of my Warwick residence, from twelve to twenty-two, were passed in a time of great political agitation; the first demonstration of "Nullification" by the South, with the great debates in Congress; the administration of General Andrew Jackson and his successors, involving the decision of the important financial questions later on. The beginning of the anti-slavery and temperance agitation was dividing the voters. Happily, the long period of at least outward consent to worship God together in one church had practically banished religious intolerance. So the "spoiling for a fight" that is the chronic condition of an Anglo-Saxon community where, as in the New England of that day, the natural weapons were the only armory of exasperated manhood, showed itself in the town politics. And as the one hundred voters, more or less, of the place were divided almost equally between the two parties, whig and democrat, there was abundant opportunity for lively times on the approach of election day, especially as there were two or three of them every year. The love of litigation was also kept alive by certain people who supplied the town with entertainment

by the frequent trials before the justice of the peace, in the tavern hall, liberally re-enforced by libations from the bar below. I have listened for days to the pleadings of young country lawyers, who afterwards reached the highest honors of their profession in different States, in trials involving the rights of the different dogs in a neighborhood and matters incredibly small, but all acting as a vent for the intense energy stored up as in a mighty receiver in one of those isolated townships. Governor N. P. Banks used to say: "One time you'd visit a Yankee town and find the people in constant friction over two or three ambitious leaders whose perpetual quarrels gave no peace to the community. Ten years later you'd go back and find a new factory village with two or three mills, each of these quarrelsome men a superintendent of one, and the town in perfect harmony." It was the vent, the opportunity to use the prodigious amount of ability stored up in these little republics, that finally set adrift the young men and women who became the makers of States, and, later, in the building up of manufactures and the growth of large villages to cities created the new grouping of society amid which we live today.

7. It must not be inferred from this prodigious development of earnestness and the often stern, serious and reserved aspect of society, that a New England town seventy to seventy-five years ago was what might be inferred from the caricatures that often appear in the novels and romances that attempt to deal with this period. Of course, every town had its due proportion of cranks, melancholics, people who lived by themselves; and in some of them every appearance of undue gaiety was regarded by the church and clergy as the last development of Satan. But no people on earth has been more richly endowed with "mother wit" and an intense love of fun for its own sake than the New England people of that day. And the more it was suppressed outwardly, the more it pervaded all classes and showed itself, like the electric spark, wherever two fun-

loving souls furnished the positive and negative conditions. And as every great European court in the middle age had its professional jester, generally the brightest man of all, licensed to say everything that nobody else dared to breathe, so every New England town was furnished with one character, a "Sam Lawson," or otherwise, whose pranks saved the people from despair on anything, even their own salvation.

The man of all others who "kept things going" in Warwick, in my youth, under proper training, might have made another Artemus Ward or Mark Twain. As it was, his genius blazed out in a comical way he had of giving to every person in town a queer nick-name, which fitted so close that, once tried on, it was as easy to get along without your skin as to dodge it. He appropriated to himself the respectable name, "Mr. Chase", and honored his partner in life, as "Lady Washington." The goings on of this town wit were a constant entertainment to the community, and the sparkles of not bad-humored witticism that came from "Mr. Chase" became for several years a positive element in the schooling of the boys and girls. After his day came up from Boston town a man, with his admirable wife, so wise, kind and appreciative, with such a fund of delightful humor that would have made him a bosom friend of Charles Lamb, ready to turn everything that approached a dismal crisis on its comical side, without children, but the dear "uncle" of every boy or girl that needed help outside the home, that I verily believe his ministry of cheerfulness was for years the best of all the ministries in the town, already distracted by the attempt to "dispense the gospel" from four pulpits instead of one.

The "conclusion of the whole matter" is that, during the hundred years between the incorporation of Warwick and the decade before the outbreak of the civil war, a New England town like Warwick—and there were many such—was a concentrated and isolated university for train-

ing half a dozen generations of as able, effective and truly superior people as ever took a hand in the making of a nation. But, of course, this tremendous concentration and development of local ability had its shadow-side in an exaggerated sense of personal "independence", an obstinate provincialism and the lack of appreciation of a cosmopolitan order of society, which sometimes put these New England States in political policy in opposition to the growth of the Republic. Within the past fifty years we have been pretty thoroughly disciplined out of our conceit of an exclusive Anglo-Saxon civilization, by the prodigious invasion from abroad in our own State and the spectacle of the magnificent development of the commonwealths beyond the Berkshire Hills that, from the first, adopted the policy of making "Native Americans" out of "all sorts and conditions" of people in the round world.

The change from this old order began in my youth, with the establishment of a "factory village" in many of the hill towns around a "water power" in a valley, which soon outgrew the original town and in time became what everywhere out of New England is called a city, with the later building up of great manufacturing centers with twice the sixty-two thousand people of the Boston of seventy years ago. It was inevitable that the New England town of that day finally was to become a city or flourishing village, or one of a group of suburban towns adjacent to such a center. The emphasis of life today in New England is on its urban side. The marvelous improvement in transportation has now practically placed every Massachusetts farmer within an hour's ride or ten minutes' communication with a flourishing village or city of from three to a hundred thousand people and made every considerable village practically one of the wards of the nearest city.

Perhaps we shall better realize this startling fact by a glance at what has happened in and around our beloved

town, Warwick, since the day of which I am writing, from 1825 to 1850.

Warwick was then one of nine towns, only four of which had a larger population than its 1,150, the group ranging from 488 to 1,889. This entire region of thirty miles square was a farming country, watered by two rivers and numerous brooks and ponds; outside the meadow land and valleys a tumble of high hills with our Mt. Grace the summit, 1,600 feet high, and our "upper village" 1,000 feet above the sea. There were less than 10,000 people in the entire region, probably not 500 of foreign birth. I have described the opportunities of the youth in the church and school, including two academies, and given a general impression of the way the people lived, with very little absolute poverty and a sprinkling of men who could boast the old-time estimate of wealth: "He's worth $40,000."

Several of these towns, including our own, have declined in population and importance with their share of "abandoned farms" and apparently no immediate prospect of recuperation. But in 1900, there was in this thirty miles square a population of more than 25,000. Two little hamlets of my youth are now flourishing villages of 7,000 and 9,000 people, with practically all the advantages of city life, furnishing three millions and four millions of the entire tax valuation of the nine towns, eleven million, five hundred thousand dollars. It is easier today to reach either of these centers from Warwick village than to visit half the Warwick farmers of seventy years ago from the old meeting-house. There is now a market for every man who can put his brains into his hands in furnishing supplies for what is possibly a population of thirty thousand people. By the great change in church affairs—leaving out Northfield, now a National educational religious center—a score of these churches have become each a group of institutions, with arrangements for social, educational, charitable and missionary enterprize never dreamed of before. Every one of

the 5,000 school children in these towns is now entitled to a free high-school education, superior to the old academy, and the public school property of the region is probably in the neighborhood of half a million dollars, without estimating the Moody seminaries. There are fifty thousand volumes in the public libraries, and every family may be reached by a daily newspaper of the first class. In my grandfather Cobb's diary, I find a record of the battles of the wars of Napoleon, often months after their occurrence ; while today it is easier for any inhabitant of this village to know what was going on yesterday in the Japanese and Russian contest than in my youth to hear of the last boy drowned in the Connecticut River, in Northfield, or the man who had broken his leg in Orange. The method of trading in the dozen or more country stores in the old day "failed" all but a very few of the more enterprizing "store keepers" and left many people finally restless and uncertain, with little to look forward to after a life of half a century of toil.

One of the results of the rapid-transit system of travel is now a reversion to the good old British idea of every well-to-do family having a country or suburban home, away from the terrible rush and roar even of a manufacturing village of 5,000 people. I am not here to advise the farmers of Warwick what to do with their lands. But after an observation of every part of our country east of the great continental mountain range that overlooks the Pacific realm, I am here to say that I know of no six miles square that, with proper investment and good management, would furnish a greater number of sites for charming summer homes, with a more healthful climate and attractive scenery, both for city visitors and people from the crowded communities in the valleys that are invited to "lift up their eyes unto the hills" of Warwick and find there the "strength" that comes from a quiet interval in the mad rush of the tremendous days in which we live. And if this picture of the twenty-five years in old Warwick which I have been

living over again during my week of preparation for this occasion and the prophecy of what may to our children present a new Warwick even more attractive of its sort than the old, shall set anybody in my hearing to thinking on the possibilities of the dear old home lot, I shall thank the good Providence that in promoting me to the Warwick aristocracy of eighty years has kept me alive once more to behold your faces and listen once more to the echo of beloved old voices on this most glorious of old Warwick summer days.

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